point out that the Committee for Development Policy in its report E/2003/33 concluded that Timor-Leste fulfilled the necessary conditions in order to be registered on the list of least developed countries and recommends its registration on that list. Furthermore, in its decision 2003/280 adopted during the substantive session of 2003, the United Nations Economic and Social Council ratified that recommendation and decided to include Timor-Leste on the list of least developed countries, provided the Government of Timor-Leste accepts that decision. In this respect, the draft resolution under review, A/58/L.36, confirms that the Government of Timor-Leste has given its consent to be included in the list of least developed countries and otherwise endorses the recommendation of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The Group of 77 and China would like draft resolution A/58/L.36 to be adopted by consensus.

Since the publication of the draft resolution, the following delegations have joined the list of sponsors: Germany, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/58/L.36, entitled, "Report of the Committee for Development Policy".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.36?

Draft resolution A/58/L.36 was adopted (resolution 58/112).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 12.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/58/561/Add.1)

The President: I first invite members to turn their attention to the report of the Fifth Committee on sub-item (a) of agenda item 17 entitled, "Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions", document A/58/561/Add.1. The Fifth Committee recommends in paragraph 11 of its report that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2004: Mr. Andrzej Abraszewski (Poland), Mr. Manlan Narcisse Ahounou (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. Collen Kelapile (Botswana), Mr. Besley Maycock (Barbados) and Mr. Murari Raj Sharma (Nepal).

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint the persons whom I have just mentioned as members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions?

It was so decided (decision 58/405 B).

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/58/562)

The President: In paragraph 9 of its report the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members of the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2004: Mr. Kenshiro Akimoto (Japan), Mr. Petru Dumitriu (Romania), Mr. Haile Selassie Getachew (Ethiopia), Mr. Ihor Humenny (Ukraine), Mr. David Leis (United States of America) and Mr. Meshal Al-Mansour (Kuwait).

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint the persons I have just mentioned as members of the Committee on Contributions?

It was so decided (decision 58/411).

The President: In paragraph 10 of the same report the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. David Dutton (Australia) as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 17 December 2003 and ending on 31 December 2004.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint the person I just mentioned as a member of the Committee on Contributions?

It was so decided (decision 58/411).

(c) Appointment of a member of the Board of Auditors

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/58/563)

The President: In paragraph 5 of its report the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the First President of the Court of Accounts of France as a member of the Board of Auditors for a six-year term of office beginning on 1 July 2004.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to appoint the First President of the Court of Accounts of France as a member of the Board of Auditors?

It was so decided (decision 58/412).

(d) Confirmation of the appointment of members of the Investments Committee

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/58/564)

The President: In paragraph 5 of its report the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly confirm the appointment by the Secretary-General of the following persons as members of the Investments Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2004: Mr. Ahmad Abdullatif (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Fernando Chico Pardo (Mexico) and Mr. J. Y. Pillay (Singapore).

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to confirm the appointment of the persons I just mentioned as members of the Investments Committee?

It was so decided (decision 58/413).

(e) Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/58/565)

The President: In paragraph 5 of its report the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2004: Mr. Julio Barboza (Argentina) and Mr. Dayendra Sena Wijewardane (Sri Lanka).

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint the persons I just mentioned as members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal?

It was so decided (decision 58/414).

(f) Appointment of the members of the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women

The President: The terms of office of the present five members of the Consultative Committee, appointed under General Assembly decision 55/311 of 29 November 2000, expire on 31 December 2003. Following consultations, I have appointed Canada, Jordan, Mexico, Niger and Slovenia as members of the Consultative Committee for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2004.

May I consider that the General Assembly takes note of those appointments?

It was so decided (decision 58/415).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (a) to (f) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 34

Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security

The President: It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth session?

It was so decided (decision 58/527).

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 34.

developed countries, that its efforts are constrained by extreme local climatic conditions and droughts that produce a severe shortage of potable water, all of which place serious constraints on the fragile economic, budgetary, social and administrative structures of the country.

In its operative paragraphs, the draft resolution underscores Djibouti's developmental and humanitarian challenges that critically impact on the country's aspirations. It also calls for solidarity with the Government and people of Djibouti, who, among other difficulties, will face acute water-supply shortages by the year 2020, as reflected in the relevant report of the Secretary-General.

Operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution notes with satisfaction the implementation of reform programmes by Djibouti and, in that context, appeals to Governments, international financial organizations, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to respond adequately to the financial and material needs of Djibouti, in line with the poverty reduction strategy paper. Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize the resources necessary for an effective programme of financial and technical material assistance to Djibouti.

There is a clear case of a need for economic assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti, and I therefore propose to the Assembly that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus.

I have the further honour to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Germany and Ireland.

Finally, I have the honour to introduce the last item on my list, namely, draft resolution A/58/L.45, entitled "Special emergency economic assistance for the recovery and the development of the Comoros".

First, allow me to make the following oral revisions, as provided by the Comorian delegation, the drafter of the draft resolution, and agreed to by the other partners.

Operative paragraph 1 should read as follows:

> "Welcomes the signing of the Fomboni Agreement in February 2001, which created prospects for a peaceful resolution of the separatist crisis".

The last two operative paragraphs should be inverted. That is to say, the current operative paragraph 9 should become new operative paragraph 10, and the current operative paragraph 10 should become new operative paragraph 9.

The last amendment is the deletion of the words "the form of" contained in the fourth line of new operative paragraph 9.

If those oral amendments are in order, I will continue.

This draft resolution was previously introduced in the General Assembly in 1996 and 1998.

Faced with the humanitarian needs, all the internal and external major crisis and the unfavourable geographic situation of the Comoros, which has been classified as a least developed country, the Comorian Government has requested the support of the international community to assist the Comorian people. The current draft resolution therefore reflects the various developments that have negatively affected the economic and political stability of the country, as well as the important events that have had a positive effect on the political stability of the Comoros. In that regard, it should be noted that, two days from today, the authorities of the Government of the Union of the Comoros and the authorities of the autonomous islands will — with the assistance of South Africa, the countries of the region and the international community — sign a political agreement in Moroni that will end the six-year secessionist movement and establish all the institutions stipulated by the new Constitution.

Recognizing also that financial resources available remain insufficient to deal with the basic need to ensure the humanitarian, economic and political recovery of the country, an appeal is made in the draft resolution that, following the finalization of the political processes that are currently under way, financial and technical assistance be provided to the most affected sectors of the population in order to achieve reconstruction and sustainable development.

A request is also made to the Secretary-General, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, to gather relevant information and to assess the needs of the country and possible assistance from the international community.

Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present draft resolution.

To conclude my introduction of this draft resolution, I would like to thank all Member States for their support and cooperation, particularly the delegations of France, Japan, the United States, the European Union and the African and Arab Groups, as well as the Ambassador of Luxembourg, who was the Chairperson of the informal consultations, and all the sponsors of draft resolution A/58/L.45, which I recommend that the General Assembly adopt by consensus.

Allow me to also announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, Panama has also become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Italy to introduce, on behalf of the European Union, draft resolutions A/58/L.33/Rev.1 and A/58/L.47.

Mr. Carnelos (Italy): On behalf of the European Union and the other sponsors, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel", which is contained in document A/58/L.47.

Since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have joined the list of sponsors: Brazil, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Timor-Leste.

The safety of humanitarian personnel working in the field is a key issue for the European Union and the sponsors of the draft resolution. In view of the dangers and risks to which humanitarian personnel are increasingly exposed, the international community must act jointly and decisively to strengthen the protection of humanitarian personnel and to end the culture of impunity for those who carry out acts of violence against them. The atrocious attacks in Baghdad, in particular, have had a significant impact on the perception of safety and security, an issue that must be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Building on the text agreed last year, this draft resolution addresses that issue. In its preambular part, the draft resolution expresses our grave concern and condemns acts of violence in many parts of the world against humanitarian personnel. It also expresses profound regret for the deaths of all international and national humanitarian workers, and recalls the primary responsibility of States hosting a United Nations mission for the protection of the personnel working in the field.

The operative part of the draft resolution urges States to take the necessary measures to protect humanitarian personnel and to ensure safe and unhindered access for such persons. It also calls upon all States to respect their obligations under the relevant international instruments, in particular the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, as well as to consider becoming parties to that Convention and others dealing with the privileges and immunities of United Nations staff and to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The draft resolution further calls on the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures in various areas to enhance the safety and security of United Nations personnel.

Among the new elements introduced in the draft resolution, I wish to draw the Assembly's attention to the request for the Secretary-General to further enhance security consciousness within the Organization, while welcoming the ongoing initiative already undertaken in that area. The draft resolution also contains stronger language on the need to end impunity, along the same lines of the language utilized by the Security Council in its resolution 1502 (2003), of last August.

While stressing the need for increased security, the draft resolution also underlines the importance of having the necessary presence of humanitarian and United Nations workers in crisis situations. The international community expects humanitarian workers to be physically present in order for them to fulfil their mandates. In that regard, the draft resolution invites the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations to strengthen their analysis of threats to safety and security in order to minimize security risks and to facilitate informed decisions on the maintenance of an effective presence in the field.

I would like to thank all the delegations that participated in the negotiations on this draft resolution and that contributed to the text. Interested delegations have worked hard with the European Union and last year's sponsors in order to update and improve the text

while maintaining consensus. The European Union is pleased that consensus came very close to being achieved on the new elements introduced in this draft resolution. At the end of the negotiation process, yesterday, one delegation announced its objection to two paragraphs that had already been adopted by consensus last year and that had not been questioned during the various readings of the draft resolution this year. Those paragraphs are also highly relevant to the draft resolution.

I wish to appeal to all delegations to refrain from amending the text. The European Union and the sponsors hope that the draft resolution can be adopted without a vote, as in past years. That would allow the General Assembly to send a strong message of support in this critical area to our personnel working in the field.

Allow me now to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/58/L.33/Rev.1. This is a draft resolution on assistance to the Palestinian people that reflects the outcome of constructive consultations with interested delegations.

In its preambular paragraphs, the draft resolution, inter alia, expresses great concern at the deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinian people throughout the occupied territories, which constitutes a mounting humanitarian crisis. It also notes the great economic and social challenges facing the Palestinian people and is conscious of the urgent need for international assistance in that regard. Furthermore, it stresses the need for the full engagement of the United Nations in the process of building Palestinian institutions and providing broad assistance to the Palestinian people.

A new paragraph has been included in the preambular part of the draft resolution that welcomes the Security Council's unanimous endorsement of the road map through resolution 1515 (2003), in order to reflect the most important political development to occur last year. The new paragraph has also been introduced to highlight the fact that the road map could help relaunch the political dialogue towards comprehensive peace, which would undoubtedly help to improve the situation of Palestinian refugees.

In its operative paragraphs, the draft resolution takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General and his Personal Humanitarian Envoy on the humanitarian conditions and needs of the Palestinian people. Moreover, it urges Member States, the international financial institutions of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to extend economic and social assistance as rapidly and as generously as possible, including emergency assistance to counter the impact of the current crisis. In that regard, the draft resolution calls upon the international donor community to expedite the delivery of pledged assistance and stresses the importance of ensuring the free passage of aid and the free movement of persons and goods. Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session containing an assessment of the assistance received and the needs that are yet to be met.

It is the hope of the sponsors that the draft resolution will find broad support. We regret the fact that the draft resolution will not be adopted by consensus as in previous years.

I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Bulgaria, Cuba, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Japan, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

Finally, I would like to inform members of an oral revision to the eleventh preambular paragraph in order to update the draft resolution vis-à-vis the latest developments to take place on the issue of assistance to the Palestinian people. That paragraph should read as follows:

> "Noting the convening of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting, held in London on 18 and 19 February 2003 and in Rome on 10 December 2003, to review the state of the Palestinian economy."

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.39.

Mr. Schori (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of its sponsors, a draft resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, which is contained in document A/58/L.39.

I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution before the Assembly, the following countries have become sponsors:

Belarus, Brazil, Estonia, India, Monaco, the Republic of Moldova and Turkey.

The text of the draft resolution was discussed during several informal consultations. Valuable proposals were made for the improvement of the text, and agreement was reached on all paragraphs. My delegation is grateful for the contributions made by other delegations, and would like to thank the sponsors and other delegations for the good and constructive spirit of cooperation and partnership in which the consultations were held.

The draft resolution begins by recalling landmark Assembly resolution 46/182, which still guides the work of the United Nations in the humanitarian field. It reaffirms the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality in the provision of humanitarian assistance and recognizes that independence is also an important guiding principle. It expresses the General Assembly's grave concern about, and strongly condemns, acts of violence against humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel, and urges all States to take the necessary measures to ensure their safety and security. It also expresses grave concern about the lack of access to victims of humanitarian emergencies in many parts of the world and calls upon Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations to ensure the safe and unhindered access to affected populations. It also reaffirms the obligations of all States and parties to an armed conflict to protect civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The draft resolution also highlights the need to mobilize adequate levels of financing for emergency humanitarian assistance, and that adequate assistance during the transition from relief to development is important. It encourages donors to improve their response to humanitarian emergencies through policies and practices of good donorship and calls upon relevant United Nations organizations to improve and increase consistency in the way humanitarian needs are assessed. It welcomes the appointment of the new emergency relief coordinator, Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jan Egeland. It emphasizes that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) should benefit from adequate and predictable funding and stresses the need to increase, in an incremental way, the share of the budget of OCHA borne by the United Nations regular budgets.

On a final note, I would like, through you, to express my gratitude to my colleague, Ambassador Jean-Marc Hoscheit for his able chairmanship and guidance during the informal consultations on this agenda item. My delegation and the other sponsors hope that the draft resolution contained in document A/58/L.39 can be adopted by consensus.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Panama to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.42.

Ms. Morgan-Moss (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Panama is honoured to submit under item 40, sub-item (b) of the agenda of the General Assembly, on behalf of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, draft resolution A/58/L.42 entitled, "International assistance to and cooperation with the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America". I am pleased to inform you that since we introduced this draft resolution, the following countries have joined the list of sponsors: Afghanistan, Brazil, Bolivia, Spain, the United States, Ireland, Greece, Portugal and the Dominican Republic.

The preamble of this draft resolution repeats the previous resolutions that highlight and acknowledge the importance of support and cooperation and international, bilateral and multilateral technical, financial and economic assistance, in order to maintain and consolidate peace in Central America after the armed conflicts and natural disasters that this region has experienced.

In general, the draft highlights the important progress that has been made by Central American countries in consolidating democracy and good governance, in strengthening civilian Governments, human rights and the rule of law, as well as in State and economic reform and regional integration.

Likewise, it also reflects the desire of the people of Central America to live and prosper in a climate of peace and solidarity and points out the consolidation of the Centre for Coordination of the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC). In this important document, which is the result of an acknowledgement of the vulnerability of our poorest populations, in particular women and children, we take into account the adoption of the Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerability and Disasters in Central America, which

is the main instrument for the development, updating, adaptation and the integrated management of regional plans, as well as for conserving water resources and preventing and controlling forest fires.

We also point out the fact that the Board of Directors of CEPREDENAC has prepared the Mitch +5 Regional Forum in accordance with the Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerability and Disasters in Central America, as well as the Regional Programme for Risk Management in Central America (CEPREDENAC-UNDP).

As on previous occasions, this draft recognizes the valuable and effective contribution of the bodies, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, of the various Government and non-governmental entities of the donor community, as well as the Regional Consultative Group for the transformation and modernization of Central America. It also emphasizes the importance of the successful conclusion in October 2003 of the negotiations between the European Union and Central America for an agreement on political dialogue and cooperation which is designed to strengthen relations between both regions and to promote Central American integration.

In its operative part, the draft resolution notes that the significant reduction of non-reimbursable cooperation, which has been seen in the last two years, as was pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, contained in document A/58/286 on international assistance to and cooperation with the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Central America.

Nonetheless, it does mention the renewal, in December 2002, of a commitment of multilateral and bilateral development bodies to the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, which is taking place, with the assistance of funds from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility through the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Inter-American Development Bank, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation and the United States Agency for International Development.

Furthermore, it also notes the efforts and progress made in mine clearance in Central America and urges the bodies of the United Nations system, as well as the Organization of American States and the international community, to continue providing the material and technical and financial support that is required by the Governments of Central America to complete their mine clearance activities.

Lastly, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its sixtieth session, a report on the implementation of the current resolution as part of a consolidated report under the item entitled "The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development", which would contribute to the efforts to revitalize the General Assembly, since in its sixtieth session, we will present only one resolution on the topic of Central America.

For all of those reasons and on behalf of the sponsors of this draft resolution, we ask that the draft be adopted by the Assembly.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.43.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentinean delegation is honoured to submit, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/58/L.43 entitled, "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development", within the framework of sub-item (d) of agenda item 40 entitled, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance".

This draft resolution recognizes the value of national and regional action to place at the disposal of the United Nations system pre-identified volunteer corps who are trained, on a standby status, both through the United Nations Volunteers as well as through other agencies, in order to provide specialized human resources and to provide emergency relief as well as rehabilitation, while preserving the non-political, neutral and impartial character of humanitarian action. Furthermore, the draft encourages the operational partners of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Volunteers and the United Nations Development Programme to use the experience of the White Helmet volunteers, even in their response to chronic situations marked by hunger, malnutrition and poverty, and acknowledges the role that the White Helmet initiative could play in disseminating and complying with the decisions contained in the Millennium Declaration.

Lastly, it requests the Secretary-General, taking into account the 10 years since the beginning of the White Helmet initiative, which will conclude in 2004, and in light of the success of different coordinated actions with United Nations agencies, to look into possible steps and modalities to strengthen the integration of the White Helmets initiative within the work of the United Nations system by suggesting appropriate mechanisms and sectors, and to report on this matter at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

The Argentinian delegation would like to thank all of the delegations for the attention they have given to our draft resolution and particularly the sponsors for their constructive comments and suggestions which will make it possible to enrich the original proposal and to come up with a precise and balanced text.

I have the honour to announce that since the publication of the current draft resolution A/58/L.43, the following countries have joined the list of sponsors: Bulgaria, Georgia, Monaco, Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Argentinian delegation is pleased to submit today draft resolution A/58/L.43 and trusts that it can be adopted by consensus.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.44.

Mr. Isakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, as well as more than 40 other delegations that have become sponsors, it is my honour to introduce to the General Assembly a draft resolution entitled, "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster", contained in document A/58/L.44.

The draft resolution before the General Assembly today has been agreed to as a result of a series of informal consultations which have made it possible to take into account a number of constructive proposals made by our partners. We would like to thank all of the delegations which took part in those discussions. In particular, we would like to express our gratitude to the sponsors of the draft resolution, whose number has grown this year.

We are particularly pleased to report that, after issuance of the draft resolution, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Estonia and Ethiopia have also become sponsors. International post-Chernobyl cooperation is just as important as ever, regardless of the time which has elapsed since the disaster. The situation in Chernobyl and in affected regions of the Republic of Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation remain difficult. The disaster at the nuclear power plant was the cause of the core complex's particular problems in the areas of health, the use of natural resources and the economic development of the affected regions, issues which still are affecting a large number of people, including children, in the hardest-hit countries. The draft resolution is aimed at searching for the optimal effective international response to those problems, while preserving the important mobilizing and coordinating role of the United Nations and is, in that context, aimed at building a new post-Chernobyl strategy for the United Nations. As is well known, the strategy adopted in 2002 provides for gradually switching the focus of interest to overcoming the consequences of the disaster to the socio-economic sphere, while in no way detracting from the urgent nature of the tasks remaining in the field of health, protection of the environment and scientific research.

In the preamble and operative parts of the draft resolution, we stress the importance of the efforts of the hardest-hit countries themselves in overcoming the consequences of the catastrophe.

At the same time, we welcome practical measures taken by the Secretary-General and the United Nations coordinator for international economic post-Chernobyl cooperation, to strengthen coordination of international efforts in this area and also the work being done in this area by the agencies in the United Nations system, and members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl.

We stress the need for coordinated international cooperation in studying the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. As an important new step in this direction, we welcome the launching, in June 2003, of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network, whose task is to consolidate and coordinate scientific research in this area and ensure effective coordination for further scientific work.

We also look favourably on the creation of a Chernobyl forum under the aegis of the International

Atomic Energy Agency and the coordination of its activity with the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl. Questions of post-Chernobyl cooperation still remain at the centre of attention of the heads of States of Members States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Of great importance in that area is the welcome reserved by the draft resolution for the decision of the Council of Heads of States of the CIS, proclaiming 26 April as the international day for commemorating the victims of radiation accidents and disasters in CIS countries, and inviting Member States of the United Nations to observe that day and to carry out appropriate measures to commemorate the victims of such accidents and catastrophes, in order to enhance public awareness of the consequences of radiation accidents to human health and the environment throughout the world.

Permit me to draw your attention to the fact that draft resolution A/58/L.44, for technical reasons, contains some insignificant departures from the text agreed upon during the course of consultations. Particularly, in the penultimate line of operative paragraph 4, the word "additional" should be replaced by "adequate", and in the first line of operative paragraph 9, the word "international" should be deleted. We look forward to the draft resolution being adopted by consensus. We are convinced that it will serve the further enhancement of effective international cooperation in overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.46.

Mr. Guterres (Timor-Leste): On behalf of the 56 delegations listed in document A/58/L.46 and the delegations of Slovakia, Luxembourg, South Africa, Germany, Malta, Mongolia, Sweden, Dominica, Nepal and Azerbaijan, who have joined as sponsors, I have the honour of introducing the draft resolution entitled, "Assistance for humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development for Timor-Leste".

The draft resolution is in line with previous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and takes into account recent developments and the many challenges ahead. It acknowledges the ongoing crucial role of the international community, including Member States, the United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in support of Timor-Leste's nation-building efforts.

The draft, while acknowledging the progress made in the transition from relief and rehabilitation to development, identifies vulnerabilities in the capacity of the Government of Timor-Leste to address humanitarian emergencies. In this regard, it welcomes the continued response of the international community to the need for aid and assistance provided by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme and all other international and non-governmental organizations during the recent floods and drought.

It especially urges the international community and the United Nations system with these programmes to continue to support the Government and the people of Timor-Leste in addressing its development needs and challenges, especially in its health infrastructure, and the judicial, law enforcement and public administration sectors.

The draft welcomes the growing participation of the women of Timor-Leste in all aspects of society, and encourages further efforts to address gender issues. It welcomes the continuing efforts of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in facilitating national reconciliation and the return of refugees to Timor-Leste. It welcomes the second meeting of the Joint Ministerial Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, held in Dili in September 2003, which reiterated a commitment of both Governments to strengthen their cooperation in areas of common interest.

Finally, we have a correction to operative paragraph 3. The last part should read as follows: "reconciliation and the voluntary return of remaining refugees, and sustainable development".

I also would like to announce that the delegations of Indonesia and France also have joined the list of sponsors. It is our hope that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as was the case in previous years.

The President: Before we proceed further, I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding with the consideration today of the draft resolution contained in document A/58/L.47. In this connection, since the draft resolution has only been circulated today, it would be necessary to waive the

relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objections, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with this proposal.

It was so decided.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/58/L.31/Rev.1; A/58/L.33/Rev.1, as orally revised; A/58/L.39; A/58/L.40; A/58/L.41; A/58/L.42; A/58/L.43; A/58/L.44, as orally corrected; A/58/L.45, as orally revised; A/58/L.46, as orally corrected; and A/58/L.47.

Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Mekel (Israel): Israel shares the concern of the international community over the deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the Middle East region. Violence and terrorism, by their very nature, entail hardship for the civilian population. Israeli and Palestinian civilians have both endured tremendous pain and suffering as a consequence of the upsurge in terrorism in the last three years. Bringing this suffering to an end and providing for the security and prosperity of all the peoples in the region are critical components of any successful peace initiative and are therefore a prime objective of Israeli policy. In this respect, Israel welcomes the efforts of Member States and of international agencies to relieve the suffering of innocent civilians.

Israel has done its utmost to cooperate with international actors in an effort to facilitate their humanitarian work aimed at improving the living conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Despite the unrelenting threat of terrorism that Israel confronts on a daily basis, we have consistently tried to permit the flow of food, medicine, humanitarian assistance and other necessities to the greatest extent possible.

While Israel has tried, and will continue to try, to facilitate humanitarian assistance to the greatest extent possible, Palestinian terrorists have consistently exploited any Israeli attempt to ease the conditions of the Palestinian people. Terrorists have viewed measures intended to increase freedom of movement as opportunities to infiltrate Israeli cities. They have used the immunity granted to medical and humanitarian vehicles to smuggle weapons and explosives. It is clear from these examples that terrorists pose a threat not only to those they target, but also to those they hide behind.

It is therefore entirely disingenuous to suggest, as certain speakers did in the debate on this item, that Israeli policies are the source of the hardships facing the Palestinian people. As is obvious to anyone willing to make an honest assessment of Palestinian economic and social development over the past decade, in periods in which the Palestinian leadership was actively confronting terrorist organizations and engaging in serious negotiations with Israel, the living conditions of the Palestinian people steadily improved. It was only with the breakdown of the peace process and the Palestinian resort to a deliberate campaign of terrorism aimed at the citizens of Israel that conditions began to decline.

While it is politically useful for the Palestinians to place the blame for their current predicament solely on Israel's shoulders, such allegations will do little to offer any relief to Palestinian civilians who do not participate in acts of terror. If the international community is serious about alleviating the humanitarian plight of the Palestinian people, the single most important thing it can do is to insist that the Palestinian leadership end its campaign of violence, terror and incitement, as called for in signed agreements and in the road map.

In previous years, Israel has joined the consensus on the resolution out of concern for the welfare for all civilians in the region, including Palestinian civilians. We have done so despite the fact that the resolution has used terms in reference to the West Bank and Gaza Strip that are not consistent with the terms used in the agreements between the parties and do not reflect, in Israel's view, the legal status of the West Bank and Gaza as disputed territory which, pursuant to signed agreements, are a matter to be directly negotiated between the two sides.

At the same time, we do not believe that the attention of the international community should be devoted solely to the welfare of Palestinian civilians in this conflict. Israeli citizens, including children suffering from terrorism, are no less deserving of concern.

We will abstain this year on the resolution because it includes new language unrelated to humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, including outright reference to Security Council resolution 1515 (2003), which we do not feel is appropriate or relevant in this context. Our views with respect to this resolution and to the need to focus on implementation of the road map and on negotiations as the agreed basis for resolving the conflict have been made clear elsewhere. We regret that this Assembly session has been used, once again, to further a partisan and political agenda that has sunk to the level of denying Israel the opportunity to present for a vote a draft resolution on the welfare of Israeli children, after an analogous draft resolution on Palestinian children was adopted. In such a cynical, negative and politicized atmosphere, Israel, for all its good will, does not feel it is in a position to support the draft resolution. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful that we will soon be able to return to a process of negotiation, which is the only way to achieve a lasting political settlement for the benefit of all of the people of the region.

Mr. Cumberbach Miguén (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation would like to point out that our joining the consensus for the adoption of draft resolution A/58/L.39 devoted to strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations does not mean that we endorse, in the wording of the draft resolution, the use of concepts, such as the "culture of protection" found in operative paragraph 12, that still have not been properly discussed within the framework of the work of the Organization and that, owing to their vagueness, open the door to distortion in applying the principles in Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 referring to the important topic of humanitarian assistance and to the relevant principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Shimamori (Japan): On behalf of the delegation of Japan, I would like to explain Japan's position on draft resolution A/58/L.39 entitled, "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations". The Japanese Government has long attached great importance to effective and efficient coordination of humanitarian activities. Such coordination is indispensable to achieving the optimum outcome with inherently limited resources.

Japan has therefore been an active supporter of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which plays a key role in coordinating United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other relevant actors in humanitarian assistance. We are also sympathetic to the view that OCHA's financial base should be strengthened so that it can fully discharge its expected roles and responsibilities.

Japan believes one way to achieve such a strengthened financial base is by broadening the Office's donor base, and for this reason it particularly welcomes preambular paragraph 10, which reflects this concept. A broadened donor base would, in turn, contribute to strengthening the solidarity of the international community on the subject of humanitarian assistance by providing a sense of ownership to a wider range of countries.

While sympathetic to OCHA's need to strengthen its financial base, Japan holds the firm view that this should not lead to an increase in the overall United Nations regular budget. In that context, we are concerned about operative paragraph 3, which refers to the Office's share of the United Nations regular budget. Agenda item 40 (a) deals with the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance and is not the appropriate venue to talk about the overall United Nations regular budget. In this context, we would like to remind our colleagues that in its first report (A/58/250), the General Committee drew the attention of the General Assembly to its resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, in which it expressed concern for the tendency of its substantive committees and other intergovernmental bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters. The same resolution reaffirms that the Fifth Committee is the Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters.

In order not to prejudge the work of the Fifth Committee, we should therefore interpret operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution as a political statement that should not lead to concrete budgetary

implications. My delegation would be opposed to this paragraph if it, in fact, were meant to be more than a statement of the political will of the Assembly. I should point out that the Japanese position, namely that increasing the share of OCHA's budget borne by the United Nations regular budget should not lead to an increase in the latter, was widely shared by many Member States in the course of discussing the draft resolution. It is our understanding that operative paragraph 3 points out the need to increase the regular budget share of OCHA's budget in an incremental way in the normal course of the Secretary-General's budget process, and that it does not contradict the Japanese position. Based on such an understanding, Japan can go along with the consensus.

Mr. Shalita (Rwanda): My delegation regrets that, despite Rwanda's recognition of the need for special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my delegation cannot support draft resolution A/58/L.31/Rev.1.

The draft resolution fails to recognize recent developments in the peace process in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa and the improvement of relations among States in that region. Only last month, the heads of State of Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and South Africa met in Pretoria, South Africa, and, among other things, affirmed the view of the Third Party Verification Mechanism that there were no Rwandan troops present in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There have, in fact, been no Rwandan troops present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the pullout of Rwandan troops in October 2002. We therefore find operative paragraphs 5 and 8 of draft resolution A/58/L.31/Rev.1 unacceptable and not reflective of the realities on the ground.

On the contrary, Rwanda has been very supportive of the new Transitional Government in Kinshasa. That was demonstrated by a visit to Kinshasa only last month, by the Rwandan Foreign Minister. Despite our recognition of the need for special assistance to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we cannot support this draft resolution, because what should have been a simple humanitarian draft resolution has become unnecessarily politicized. We will, however, continue to render whatever assistance we can to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as we have done in the past, by, for example, hosting tens of thousands of Congolese refugees in various parts of Rwanda.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote. The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/58/L.31/Rev.1, A/58/L.33/Rev.1, as orally revised, A/58/L.39, A/58/L.40, A/58/L.41, A/58/L.42, A/58/L.43, A/58/L.44, as orally corrected, A/58/L.45, as orally revised, A/58/L.46, as orally corrected, and A/58/L.47.

We first turn to draft resolution A/58/L.31/Rev. 1 entitled, "Special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo." Before proceeding to take action, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/58/L.31/Rev.1: Portugal, Lithuania, Greece, Netherlands, India, France, Austria, Mali, Italy, Belgium, Egypt, Denmark, Finland, Nigeria and Senegal.

At this stage, I wish to announce that several delegations have requested a little more time before we take action on L.31/Rev.1. We shall revert to this later in the meeting.

Draft resolution A/58/L.33/Rev.1 is entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people" and has been orally revised.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic

Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Israel, Kenya

The draft resolution, as orally revised, was adopted by 170 votes to none, with 2 abstentions (resolution 58/113).

The President: Draft resolution A/58/L.39 is entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Eritrea, Timor-Leste and Nigeria.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.39?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/114).

The President: Draft resolution A/58/L.40 is entitled "Assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft, the following countries have become sponsors: Portugal, France and Austria.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.40?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/115).

The President: Draft resolution A/58/L.41 is entitled "Economic assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Portugal, Greece, Madagascar, Nigeria and Senegal.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.41?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/116).

The President: Draft resolution A/58/L.42 is entitled "International assistance to and cooperation with the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Nigeria and Senegal.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.42?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/117).

The President: Draft resolution A/58/L.43 is entitled "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Lithuania, Costa Rica, Madagascar and Nigeria.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.43?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/118).

The President: Draft resolution A/58/L.44 is entitled "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster" and has been orally corrected.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: India, Latvia and Nigeria.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.44, as orally corrected?

The draft resolution, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 58/119).

The President: Draft resolution A/58/L.45 is entitled "Special emergency economic assistance for the recovery and the development of the Comoros", and has been orally revised.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Greece, Madagascar, Islamic Republic of Iran and Senegal.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.45, as orally revised?

The draft resolution, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 58/120).

The President: Draft resolution A/58/L.46 is entitled "Assistance for humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development for Timor-Leste" and has been orally corrected.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Cuba, Lithuania, the Netherlands, France, Mali, Austria, Bolivia, Estonia, Indonesia, Denmark, Finland, Senegal, Argentina and Mauritius.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.46, as orally corrected?

The draft resolution, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 58/121).

The President: We shall now take action on draft resolution A/58/L.47.

Ms. Kelley (Director, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division): I should like to inform members that under the terms of operative paragraphs 17 to 20, 26 and 28 of draft resolution L.47, the Secretary-General is called upon to strengthen the United Nations security system, both at Headquarters and in the field.

The implementation of this request would require a detailed review and development of specific measures in that respect, including the proposal for additional resources that may be required. These proposals will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration at its resumed fifty-eighth session in 2004.

The President: Draft resolution A/58/L.47 is entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

A single separate vote has been requested on the thirteenth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/58/L.47.

Are there any objections to this request? There are none.

I shall first put to the vote the thirteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/58/L.47, on which a separate, single vote has been requested.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain,

Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Belarus, India, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Tuvalu

The thirteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/48/L.47 were retained by 149 votes to 1, with 8 abstentions.

[Subsequently the delegation of Lebanon informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour, and the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic informed the Secretariat that it had not intended to participate in the voting.]

The President: We will now take action on A/58/L.47 as a whole.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft, the following countries have become sponsors: France, Australia, Bolivia and Monaco.

Ms. Corkery (United States of America): The United States just wanted to point out at this point that we do not want to take the resolution as a whole to a vote. We are going to join the consensus. We will make our explanation of vote later.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.47 as a whole?

The draft resolution as a whole was adopted (resolution 58/122).

The President: May we go back to the draft resolution A/58/L.31/Rev.1, entitled "Special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo"?

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras,

Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Rwanda

The draft resolution was adopted by 169 votes to 1 (resolution 58/123).

The President: I give the floor to the speaker in explanation of vote after the vote on draft resolution A/58/L.47.

May I remind the delegation that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made from the delegation's seat.

Ms. Corkery (United States of America): The United States appreciates this opportunity to give its explanation of vote on A/58/L.47 on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

The lack of safe access to many communities around the globe continues to plague humanitarian agencies and costs lives, including those of humanitarian workers. The year 2003 will be a long and sadly remembered one for the unprovoked and cowardly attack in Baghdad committed against the staff of the United Nations on 19 August. We have all seen the devastating consequences of this tragedy for individual colleagues and for our community of nations. Our commitment to the safety and security of humanitarian workers worldwide is evidenced by Security Council resolution 1502 (2003). We have also demonstrated our commitment through the level of funding provided for humanitarian personnel security training and field officers over the past several years, and through our support of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD).

The last part of the thirteenth preambular paragraph, which refers to the International Criminal Court reads,

> "... noting the role that the Court could play in appropriate cases in bringing to justice those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law".

In order to make this paragraph acceptable for us, we had suggested replacing this clause with the following words from the fifth preambular paragraph of Security Council resolution 1502 (2003): "... the need for States to end impunity for such criminal acts". However, that amendment was rejected.

Operative paragraph 10 calls upon all States to consider becoming parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). We could not accept that paragraph and sought its deletion, but it was nevertheless retained in the text.

The United States can only accept neutral, factual references to the ICC. The thirteenth preambular paragraph and operating paragraph 10 are not neutral references. For those reasons, the United States voted against both the thirteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 10, but we wish to be very clear that we joined the consensus on the overall resolution.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote after adoption. I now give the floor to the Observer of Palestine to make a statement.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to express our deep thanks to all delegations that supported the draft resolution regarding assistance to the Palestinian people (A/58/L.33/Rev.1), which was adopted a while ago by more than an overwhelming majority. My delegation would also like to thank all the

sponsors of that important General Assembly draft resolution. Allow me also to express our gratitude and appreciation to all the donor countries, United Nations agencies, regional commissions and non-governmental organizations, all of which have generously contributed humanitarian and other forms of assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. Our people, who are living under extremely harsh conditions that amount to a humanitarian crisis, have deep feelings of gratitude for all those parties.

At the same time, the bulk of assistance is delivered essentially as humanitarian assistance, in lieu of aid for economic development, because of the horrendous conditions created by the occupying Power for the Palestinian people. Therefore, the urgent question is how to change the current conditions in a way that would allow genuine economic development. Against this backdrop, the importance of a political solution pursuant to the road map and Security Council resolution 1515 (2003), assumes special significance.

During past years, and since the beginning of the peace process in 1993, that resolution was adopted by consensus even following changes in the Israeli Government. With deep regret, we note that this year, the Israeli delegation chose to break away from the consensus and to depart from the only positive tradition regarding the Middle East which has been in effect for 10 years. My delegation views that change with grave concern, especially in view of the theme of the draft resolution, namely "Assistance to the Palestinian people", and in view of the full international consensus on that particular issue.

We also note with regret that the Israeli position carries some extremely dangerous political and legal connotations, which is worse than its breaking away from the consensus. This is the reason for the Israeli position. The Israeli delegation took that stand because of an added paragraph that welcomes the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1515 (2003). Try to imagine this: the Israeli delegation is not satisfied with expressing its views that reject Security Council resolutions in violation of the United Nations Charter and in the context of rejecting the road map, but also breaks away from the consensus on the question of assistance to the Palestinian people, for the very same reason. We believe that such a position should be strongly condemned and that the Assembly should draw proper lessons from that position, as we have done on our part.

We had hoped to end our intervention at this point, but a little while ago, during the explanation of vote, we listened to another Israeli statement that is befitting to occupiers, colonialists and racists, a statement that attempts to convince us that occupation is good for the people and that the Israeli occupying Power does not assume any responsibility for the humanitarian tragedy being endured by the Palestinian people.

In addition, the Israeli statement included phrases that would ensure the end of any peace process in the Middle East. The Israeli delegate claims that the occupied Palestinian territories are "disputed territories". That statement is an invitation to end the mutual recognition as well as an invitation to the Palestinian side to use phrases such as "the Zionist, racist entity". Mutual recognition is a matter that relates to both sides and we will never accept that the Israeli side would declare its illegal designs within our territories, which the whole world considers as occupied territory, without any discussion or negotiation. If such statements continue, we will find ourselves obliged to request the General Assembly to condemn those statements and locutions as constituting rejection of the Charter and a challenge to international law and Security Council resolutions. This is quite apart from the fact that such statements do not befit the General Assembly or the United Nations system as a whole.

Allow me in conclusion once again to express our appreciation to the donor community and to the General Assembly for providing assistance to our people, who are living under extremely harsh conditions.

The President: I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the General Assembly to thank Ambassador Hoscheit of Luxembourg for undertaking the task of holding consultations and negotiations on the draft resolutions adopted under agenda item 40.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 40.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (a), (c), (d) and (e) of agenda item 40?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 42 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage

Draft resolution (A/58/L.11/Rev.2)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.11/Rev.2.

Ms. Khalil (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to make a correction to draft resolution A/58/L.11/Rev.2. Paragraph 2 should read as follows.

(*spoke in English*)

> "Takes note with appreciation of the adoption of the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its thirty-second session on 17 October 2003."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

The Egyptian delegation would like to thank all the delegations that sponsored the draft resolution; since the publication of document A/58/L.11/Rev.2, the following delegations have joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Argentina, Cuba, Cyprus, Guatemala, the Republic of Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uruguay.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/58/L.11/Rev.2 entitled, "United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, 2002", as orally corrected. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.11/Rev.2, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/58/L.11/Rev.2, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 58/124).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 42?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 45

Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development

The President: May it take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of agenda item 45 and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth session?

It was so decided (decision 58/528).

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 45.

Agenda item 3 (*continued*)

Credentials of representatives to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee (A/58/625)

Draft resolution (A/58/L.48)

The President: We shall first proceed to consider the draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 11 of its report (A/58/625).

The Assembly will now take a decision on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee. The Credentials Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/125).

I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who has asked to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Hamzehei (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation would like to express its reservation on those parts of the report contained in document A/58/625 which may be construed as recognition of Israel.

The President: The General Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/58/L.48. I give the floor to the representative of Malaysia to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. Zainuddin (Malaysia): My delegation has the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, a draft resolution entitled "Representation of the

Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", as contained in document A/58/L.48 dated 15 December 2003. This draft resolution was originally sponsored by 24 delegations: Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Comoros, Cuba, Djibouti, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Palestine. In addition, three delegations have joined the list of sponsors: Brunei Darussalam, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The sponsors wish to recall that at their Thirteenth Summit Conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, last February the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement

> "reiterated that Israeli representation in the work of the General Assembly and international conferences must be in conformity with international law and called for ensuring that Israeli credentials do not cover the [Palestinian] territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem" (*A/57/759, annex III, p. 120*)

In addition, the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Maputo, Mozambique, last July, and the Tenth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, last October endorsed a similar position.

By the terms of this draft resolution, the General Assembly, having considered the report of the Credentials Committee (A/58/625), would affirm

> "that the Observer delegation of Palestine to the General Assembly represents the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and that the credentials of the delegation of Israel do not cover that territory." (*A/58/L.48*)

The second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution would factually note that,

> "pending the attainment of membership by Palestine as a Member State of the United Nations, the report [of the Credentials Committee] does not currently address the issue of the credentials of Palestine, in its capacity as Observer, to the General Assembly".

The third preambular paragraph of this draft resolution would express the Assembly's "hope that the Palestinian people will soon exercise sovereignty in their State, Palestine".

By the fourth preambular paragraph, the General Assembly would also reaffirm "the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force", in accordance with the Charter.

This draft resolution does not in any way intend to challenge the report of the Credentials Committee (A/58/625), which the General Assembly has just adopted. As far as the sponsors are concerned, the report remained unchanged as submitted and as adopted. In addition, this initiative is not an attempt to interfere at all with the technical aspects of the accreditation process, which rightfully falls within the direct purview of the Credentials Committee.

The sponsors wish to stress that the representation of Israel to the United Nations, including to the General Assembly, must be in conformity with international law. We are all very well aware that numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council have documented the fact that the territories in question are indeed under the illegal occupation of Israel. Therefore, the credentials of the delegation of Israel do not cover the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem. In addition, the draft resolution does not in any way intend to challenge either the presence of the delegation of Israel at the United Nations or its participation in the General Assembly. It is only aimed at ensuring that such participation takes place in accordance with international law.

The sponsors also wish to stress that the draft resolution should not in any way be construed as an attempt by the General Assembly to address territorial or border disputes. The Charter does not have any provisions to that effect, and we are fully aware of this. The issue that is now before us concerns specifically the question of the representation of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, which has been occupied by Israel since 1967 through various means that are in contradiction to the Charter and international law.

The adoption of this draft resolution would not have any bearing on the currently stalled efforts on final status negotiations between Israel and Palestine,

which undeniably would have to be determined by the parties concerned. Pending the eventual resolution of such negotiations, one has valid reasons to ask why this Assembly could not, at the very least, pronounce itself on the question of the legitimate representation of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, at the General Assembly at this juncture, or at any other time for that matter.

Finally, the sponsors are convinced that the adoption of this draft resolution would send a strong signal to the Government of Israel of the continued determination of the Assembly to demand the complete cessation of illegal annexation and occupation by Israel of Palestinian territory. The adoption of this draft resolution would also confirm the fact that the Observer delegation of Palestine to the United Nations is the rightful representative of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, at the United Nations, as indicated by its de facto status of providing such representation. We believe that such a just cause, premised on a legitimate basis, rightfully deserves the broadest support from States Members of the United Nations.

Given the significance of this issue, the sponsors recognize the necessity of continuing our informal consultations to secure the broadest agreement of the membership of this body on the draft resolution. Bearing that in mind, we do not insist that action be taken on the draft resolution today. However, it is the intention of the sponsors to revisit this issue in the immediate future during the current session of the General Assembly to enable the Assembly to take action on this draft resolution.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Mekel (Israel): Israel would like to express its firm opposition to the latest attempt by the Palestinians to further their political campaign against Israel. In past years, the frequent and annual abuse of the credentials-approval procedure by the Palestinians has been roundly rejected by an overwhelming number of States, but the draft resolution before us today is even more damaging and far-reaching than any previous Palestinian initiatives, as it attempts to delineate Palestinian territory under the pretext of defining Israel's credentials. Far from addressing the legitimate concerns of States, the new draft resolution not only seeks to attack Israel's credentials, but purports to grant rights of territorial representation to an Observer Mission which has no authority in that regard. This marks a dangerous effort by the Palestinian Observer to redefine the mandate of the Credentials Committee and the role of the Assembly in the credentials process.

The Palestinian draft resolution attempts to politicize a wholly technical function of the United Nations. The process of approving credentials, and the agenda item under which this takes place, seek to ensure that credentials submitted comply with the requirements set forth and the rules of procedure, and that members of delegations are duly authorized by the legitimate Government of the sending State.

In the case of Israel, the legitimacy of its representatives is not in any way in question. This initiative deals not with the question of individual credentials, but with territorial issues that have absolutely no place under this agenda item. The preambular and operative paragraphs of this draft resolution are rife with political assertions that seek to predetermine unilaterally the outcome of a territorial dispute that the parties have agreed to resolve by negotiation. Such an abuse of the credentials procedures to advance partisan initiatives is unprecedented and wholly inappropriate. The proposed draft resolution represents a violation of Palestinian undertakings in the peace process agreements. In both the Declaration of Principles and the Interim Agreement signed between Israel and the PLO, it has been agreed that neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations, and that the status of those areas will be preserved during the interim period.

It should also be noted that, under the Interim Agreement, neither the PLO nor the Palestinian Council elected within the West Bank and Gaza Strip is authorized to conduct foreign relations in respect of those areas, whether in the United Nations or in any other international forum. The Agreement states specifically that the Palestinian Council has no powers or responsibilities in the sphere of foreign relations,

while the PLO is only permitted to enter into agreements for the benefit of the Council in the limited cases set out in the Agreement.

The designation "Palestine" used within the United Nations system has no territorial connotation. General Assembly resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988, which provided that the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization", emphasized that this was without prejudice to the observer status and functions of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the United Nations system. Not only does the Palestinian proposal violate Palestinian undertakings and General Assembly resolutions; it also violates the fundamental principle of universality in the United Nations. No such draft resolution has been proposed in relation to any other State in the United Nations, even though more than 80 of the States Members of the United Nations have territorial disputes.

Countenancing political objections to Israel's credentials would represent a conspicuous act of discrimination against a Member State and would represent a dangerous precedent. Abuse of the credentials process could open a Pandora's box with regard to the many countries involved in territorial disputes throughout the world. Already, a disproportionate amount of United Nations time and resources is devoted to Palestinian initiatives. The attempt to transform every possible aspect of the General Assembly's work into a platform for scoring political points is a practice that should be strongly discouraged.

This initiative unduly harms the reputation of the United Nations, diverts our resources from important substantive issues on the Assembly's agenda and contributes nothing to the prospect of peace and security in the region.

Palestinian actions at the United Nations contradict all efforts to restart the negotiating process through the road map. The abuse of the credentials procedure is but the latest example of how the United Nations has been hijacked by narrow partisan interests that destroy its positive role and create dangerous precedents. As these incidents continue, the voice of the Assembly on Middle East affairs seizes to have legitimacy and moral authority because of the tolerance shown to this kind of tactics.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine): At the outset, we have to admit that we did not quite understand the nature of the last statement made by the Israeli representative. We could not grasp the meaning of the right of reply because we did not know to what it was intended to reply. In any case, we believe also that the Israeli representative was not listening to the points raised in the introduction of the draft resolution by the representative of Malaysia. Otherwise, he would not have mentioned many of his points.

Let me nevertheless clarify a few points. First, there has been no past initiative similar to the current one. Secondly, the case in question has nothing to do with the technical aspects of the accreditation process nor with the report of the Credentials Committee. It has nothing to do as well with territorial disputes or border disputes. It is the case of one State — Israel — occupying the whole territory of another people — the Palestinian people — for more than 36 years, intensively colonizing the land through the illegal transfer of its nationals and the confiscation of land, in addition to the annexation of part of the territory it has occupied. Indeed, this case concerns the fate of mandated Palestine partitioned by the General Assembly, the need for the realization of the State of Palestine and upholding the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Thirdly, for 36 years Israel has been the only Member of the United Nations, at least until recently, determined by the Security Council to be an occupying Power, as reflected in at least 18 Security Council resolutions, none of which, in addition to the other 19 applicable resolutions, have been complied with by the occupying Power. Let me repeat the numbers: 18 Security Council resolutions, plus another 19 applicable resolutions have never been complied with by the occupying Power.

Fourthly, the Israeli opposition to this proposal is a clear indication of its real position: its rejection of ending its occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, its rejection of ceasing and reversing its settlement activities and its rejection of the existence of an independent sovereign State of Palestine. In fact, it is a rejection of the vision of a two-State solution for peace in the Middle East. Otherwise, Israel would not have difficulty in accepting the proposed draft resolution — and it actually might not have been needed in such a case.

Fifthly, the draft resolution has always been necessary. Yet it has become even more essential in the light of Israel's actual construction of an expansionist wall inside the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. That wall has involved the confiscation and destruction of thousands of dunums of Palestinian land, the destruction of the livelihoods and lives of tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians and the de facto annexation of large areas of occupied territory. That wall is the wall that will end any attempt at peace in the Middle East. That is another reason why we have to take action and, hopefully, to adopt the draft resolution.

Finally, we hope that we will deal with this important matter in the very near future, as indicated during the introduction of the draft resolution by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the 27 sponsors.

The President: In view of the statement made earlier by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/58/L.48, the General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 50 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft decision (A/58/L.29)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on this agenda item at its 40th through 42nd plenary meetings, held on 22 and 23 October 2003.

The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/58/L.29, entitled "Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision A/58/L.29?

The draft decision was adopted (decision 58/529).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 50.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.